

10 Lessons the Arts Teach



By Elliot Eisner

- 1** The arts teach children to make **GOOD JUDGMENTS** about qualitative relationships. Unlike much of the curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts, it is judgment rather than rules that prevail.
- 2** The arts teach children that problems can have **MORE** than **ONE** solution and that questions can have more than one answer.
- 3** The arts celebrate multiple **PERSPECTIVES**. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to **SEE** and **INTERPRET** the world.

- 4** The arts teach children that in complex forms of problem solving purposes are seldom fixed, but change with circumstance and opportunity. Learning in the arts requires the **ABILITY** and a **WILLINGNESS** to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds.
- 5** The arts make **VIVID** the fact that neither words in their literal form nor numbers exhaust what we can **KNOW**. The limits of our language do not define the limits of our **COGNITION**.
- 6** The arts teach students that **SMALL DIFFERENCES** can have **LARGE EFFECTS**. The arts traffic in subtleties.
- 7** The arts teach students to think through and within a material. All art forms employ some means through which **IMAGES** become **REAL**.
- 8** The arts help **CHILDREN LEARN** to say what cannot be said. When children are invited to disclose what a work of art helps them **FEEL**, they must reach into their **POETIC CAPACITIES** to find the words that will do the job.
- 9** The **ARTS ENABLE** us to have **EXPERIENCE** we can have from no other source and through such experience to **DISCOVER** the range and variety of what we are capable of **FEELING**.
- 10** The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults **BELIEVE** is **IMPORTANT**.



Advancing Art Education

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